

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE NEW PARIS.

PARIS OF TO-DAY. Translated from the Danish of Richard Kaufmann by Miss Olga Finch. Illustrated. 8 vols., pp. 298. Cassell Publishing Company.

Many books have been written about Paris, and some very entertaining ones. This handsome volume, however, cannot rank among the best of such productions, and without the numerous and highly amusing illustrations which adorn it, might be thought almost "boring." Not justly so indeed, for it contains a great deal of highly interesting information and matter calculated to be of real value to foreign visitors to the French capital; and, moreover, it is written well up to the present day, recognizing and recording the changes which have passed over the joyous city, sweeping away some of her venerable institutions and introducing new ones. Where change has been most radical, perhaps, is in the Latin Quarter. The student of Mme. de Staél's Bohemia surely would not know the quarter to-day, for it has actually grown quiet and conventional, and the "student" has learned to live in peace, amity and decorousness, side by side with an "studiente" who has nothing in common with the old-fashioned female denizen of the quarter. The girl students of Paris are of course not at all like girl students in other countries. The Girton and Newnham girls would consider them still shockingly Bohemian probably. Many are quite poor, full of enthusiasm, theoretical scorers of conventions; but they are in effect sufficiently harmless, steady and innocent young creatures, whose wildest aberrations are limited to the wearing of uniform or class caps and the smoking of cigarettes. As many of them are Russians, moreover, this last practice can hardly be regarded as unconventional from their point of view.

The arrangement of the book is rather haphazard, but the various sketches, though often infelicitously placed, are generally interesting in themselves. The attempt of the author has been to describe Paris life in all or most of its aspects. Thus there are chapters on cafe and street life, cab and cabmen, omnibuses, the newsman, pedlers, the hotel service, modern Parisian reporters, nurses and children, the Parisian cuisine, the water supply, Parisian dinners, soirees, funerals, etc. Under the general head of theatres there are chapters on the ticket speculators, the Theatres Francais and several biographical sketches of actresses and singers. The volume concludes with "The Triumph of the Exposition," in which a sufficiently vivid panoramic view is given, with some insight to the architectural and other devices which were invented for the occasion, and interesting details about the strange exotic shows in the great exhibition. In his chapter on the modern French reporter Mr. Kaufmann gives a credit to the enterprise and audacity of these young newspaper men which shows that his acquaintances with American journalists is of the slightest; the fact being that as a vehicle of news the Paris paper of to-day is undeveloped and crude as compared with American journals, or even with English ones, which in their turn are below the American standard in this respect.

The chapters on the Parisian cuisine are disappointing, the subject being barely touched in its most interesting features, and no information being afforded which can help the stranger in Paris who wishes to dine well. The whole broad question of the restaurants, in fact, is unaccountably slighted, while too much attention is paid to the cafes, and to the superficial aspects of boulevard life. The Paris "fights," as they would be called here, differ so little from the same classes in London and New-York that it was not worth while to expend so much space upon their dodos and devils. Another feature mysteriously omitted altogether is that of shopping in Paris; a master in which women at least are certainly as much interested as in cabs and omnibuses. Mr. Kaufmann is well informed on things theatrical, and particularly on the abuse of the ticket speculator, which has reached a great magnitude, and which constitutes a very grave imposition upon the public. Before writing his chapter on the Paris water supply the author should have consulted the statistics of other modern cities. He would not then have fallen into so many errors in appertaining the relative importance of the Paris system, which, in fact, while never more than a muckheft, has long been outrun by the needs of the city. The chapter on Parisian nurses may be founded on fact, but we suspect its general tenor to be apocryphal. The French people are thrifty as a rule, and it is not credible that they should submit quietly to the impositions alleged to be practised upon them by the "Nonnou." Probably these stories ought to be taken with considerable allowance.

The sketches of "Dancing in Paris" and "Working Paris" are fullly and entertaining, but the first is too sketchy to convey a just idea of the subject, and the second is inadequate in its treatment. The author has succeeded, however, in representing the alternate breathless bustle and air of leisure which characterize the Parisians, and in conveying a clear impression of the more instant Parisian attributes. But the best feature of the book is its illustration. Why the name of the artist should have withheld is incomprehensible, for the designs are full of humor, and are spirited and good in other ways. So important are these illustrations, that it seems at times as though the text had been written up to them, rather than that they were taken from the text. The publishers have got the book out handsomely, the paper being thick and smooth, the impression careful, and the cover attractive and picturesque. With all its shortcomings it is well worth reading, and the American who intends to spend his summer in Paris might do worse than to put this volume in his trunk when he sets out on his journey.

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